650 pairs of Mail/Express trains and 2920 pairs of Passenger trains as on 31-3-1987.

(b) 1984-85—six pairs.

1985-86—nil.

1986-87—two pairs.

1987-88—seven pairs.

(c) Review of passenger services is a continuous process. At present there is no specific proposal to replace any passenger train with an express train..

Sorting Machines in the Postal Department

1915. DR. MOHD. HASHIM KIDWAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) by when sorting machines are likely to be introduced in the Postal Department; and

(b) the number of Railway Mail Service employees who are likely to become surplus as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The Planning Commission allocated Rs. 39 crores towards modernisation and mechanisation of Postal services during 7th Five Year Plan. A proposal for setting up mechanised mail processing system in Bombay is under examination. The Government appointed M/s. Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd., New Delhi in 1985 to carry out a feasibility study for setting up such a system in Bombay. The Consultant has submitted his report in May '86. The Recomendations of the Consultant are under review by a Departmental Committee of Officers. A decision is yet to be taken in the matter.

(b) Does not arise.

Airbus aircraft for Indian Airlines

1916. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

SHRI SURAJ PRASAD:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in 1986 a deal was signed for the supply of 19 Airbus aircraft which was later on reduced to 12 on optional basis so as to meet the immediate requirements of the Indian Airlines;

(b) whether the deal involved an amount of Rs. 2000 crores and if so, what are the details of the deal;

(c) whether as per the deal the Airbus industries agreed to lease aircraft to the Indian Airlines on a concessional rate; and

(d) if so, whether later on this clause was changed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Indian Airlines has, with the approval of Central Government, signed an agreement with Airbus Industries for the purchase of 19 A-320 aircraft for delivery during the period April 1989-March 1999, with an option for additional purchase of 12 A-320 aircraft for delivery in 1990-91.

(b) The total project cost for 19 A-320 airbus aricraft is Rs. 1238.37 crores.

(c) and (d) As per the purchase agreement between Indian Airlines and Airbus Industries, Airbus Industries is committed to provide leased aircraft capacity at "not to exceed" lease rates. In case the market lease rates increase, additional cost will be borne by the Airbus Industries and this clause is being adhered to by the Airbus Industries.